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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1942

Subject: "NOTES ON SAVING WOOL." Information from textile and clothing specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Wool is one of those familiar things that the war has recently made extra valuable. Wools are the warmest of our common fabrics -- warmer than cotton, or rayon. Naturally, our armed forces need great quantities of wool. And wool is no longer coming in from Australia and other countries, as it did before the war. The Government has had to cut down on wool for civilians in order to provide for our men in uniform.

So the wool you already own is worth the best care you can give it. Your wool clothes, wool blankets, wool rugs, wool upholstery fabrics, wool yarn for knitting, even left-over pieces of wool, or old wool garments--all are worth the time and care that will make them last long, and keep their warmth, their wear, and their looks.

Not everyone knows all the secrets of caring for wool so it will give good service. Even some very good housewives don't realize that wool needs different treatment from other fabrics -- that wool can be ruined by treatment that would not harm cotton or rayon. Not everyone knows that wool must have special care in washing, in dry cleaning, and pressing. So, many a soft, fluffy wool blanket has come from its first washing shrunken, heavy, and boardlike with half its warmth lost forever. And other blankets have parted in half while hanging on the line, or fallen to pieces in dry cleaning. Many a sweater and many a sock have gone into the discard from shrinking or stretching.

But in wartime wool is too valuable and too scarce to go to waste this way. So textile scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture offer you some tips on saving the wool you own.



To begin with, they say wool is a fragile fiber, and is especially easy to damage when it's wet. Wet wool cloth can come to ruin from too much heat; sudden changes from heat to cold; from rough handling; from alkali or acid--strong soap, washing powder, bleaching acid and so on. To keep wool in condition--to keep it soft, light, fluffy and warm, wash it with all these points in mind. Wash and rinse it in lukewarm water--and dry it if possible in air of about the same temperature-- "lukewarm air." Never use very hot or very cold water for washing wool. Never rinse in cold water after washing in warm water; never hang to dry near a hot stove or radiator. Sudden changes in temperature cause shrinking. Don't soak wool and don't agitate it during washing or it will shrink badly. Never boil wool. Never dry it outdoors in winter where it will freeze.

Second point in washing wool: Use soft water if possible. But don't use water carelessly "softened" with too much alkali--with washing soda, or lye, or some other strong substance. A little borax or a little household ammonia in the water are the safest softeners, but don't overdo even these or you may weaken the wool, make the color run, and the cloth stiff and harsh. And use mild soap in washing wool, never strong soap like ordinary laundry soap. Make a suds of mild soap in lukewarm water before you put the wool in. Never rub a cake of soap on the wool. The soap will stick in the fibers and be difficult to rinse out. Instead of soap you might use one of the new soapless washing materials -- soapless lathers or oils. These are not alkaline so are excellent for washing wool.

Third point in washing wool: Be gentle. Don't rub, scrub, wring, twist, pull or jerk. Squeezing--gentle squeezing is the way to treat your precious wool. Squeeze the suds through the wool to get the dirt out. Then squeeze to get the water out. Large pieces of wool can go through the wringer safely if you set the rolls loose and don't pull or stretch the cloth as it comes through. Small pieces of wool like socks or sweaters you can roll up in a bath towel a few minutes to get





Here are a couple of tips about drying wool: Knitted garments dry out of shape if you hang them on the line. They must lie flat on a towel to dry, or dry on a form. Hang blankets on a line in a folded sheet or big cloth bag until some of the water dries out. Or squeeze them so dry that they don't hang heavy with moisture and pull apart. Be sure the wind isn't strong enough to beat them. Blankets get less strain in drying if they hang half or a fourth over the line instead of full length. When the blanket is dry, fluff it by brushing each side with a stiff whisk broom. Its warmth depends a good deal on its fluffiness.

As for pressing, remember to keep your iron only medium hot. An iron just a little too hot scorches wool quickly. And always press with a moist cloth between the iron and the wool. A damp square of old sheeting is a favorite for pressing.

Now a word about dry cleaning. A recent study at the Pennsylvania State Experiment Station has showed that wool generally dry-cleans very well if it has been sponged and shrunk before being made up into a garment; otherwise it shrinks. White wool goods are likely to turn gray or yellow with long use and frequent dry cleaning. The grey color comes from dirt entangled under the scaly wool fibers. The yellow color is a chemical change. A dry cleaner can often whiten wool which is just slightly yellow or grey by a little bleaching. But if the color has changed a good deal, it is not safe to try to bleach the wool pure white again. Blankets have gone to pieces in dry cleaning from too much bleaching or too many bleachings.

Dry cleaning at home is a great fire-hazard unless you use some non-inflammable cleaning fluid like carbon tetrachloride and do the cleaning outdoors. Use enough cleaning fluid to rinse the goods thoroughly in it.

That's all about saving wool today. Another day the news will be about mending wool and making over wool.

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